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THE NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE  
NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY

STRATEGIC STUDY

AN EXAMINATION AND EVALUATION OF THE  
DEFENSE ATTACHE PERSONNEL SYSTEM

by

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A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

IN

FULLFILLMENT OF THE RESEARCH

REQUIREMENT

Research Supervisor: Captain George E. Thibault, USN

THE NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE

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THE NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE

STRATEGIC STUDIES REPORT ABSTRACT

TITLE: An Examination and Evaluation of the Defense  
Attache Personnel System

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DATE: APRIL, 1983

An analysis of current procedures for selecting, training and motivating military attaches provides support for the authors' basic findings concerning positive and negative aspects of the present personnel system. Detailed recommendations for improvements are offered in four areas: the selection process, career considerations of individual attaches, personal considerations, and training. A special report on security concerns discusses attache awareness of and preparation to counter the threats posed by hostile intelligence and violent environments abroad.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Captain Ronald K. Bell, USN (MBA, Asian Studies, San Diego State University) is a Naval Special Warfare Officer who has spent 21 years in the Asian and Pacific area. His deep interest in insular Southeast Asia has been enhanced by an attache assignment to Indonesia. He is a graduate of the Defense Language Institute, the Defense Intelligence School and the Defense Attache School where he concentrated on Asia, specifically the Philippines and Indonesia. Captain Bell is a graduate of The National War College Class of 1983.

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Colonel William B. May, USAF, (M.L.A., Johns Hopkins University) is a career intelligence officer, whose experience has been concentrated primarily in collection. He has served extensively in Europe, including attache assignments in the Soviet Union and Bulgaria. His most recent assignment was with the Defense Intelligence Agency, where he was the Warsaw Pact Air Forces Estimator for the DSARC. Colonel May is a graduate of the Armed Forces Staff College, The Air War College and is a 1983 graduate of The National War College.

Robert A. Peck (B.A., Dartmouth College) is a career foreign service officer with the Department of State. He has served in US Embassies in Kabul, Nicosia, Moscow and Ankara. Departmental assignments include the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. His most recent position was as Director of the Office of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh Affairs. Mr. Peck is a graduate of The National War College Class of 1983.

Colonel Roger G. Seymour, USA, (B.S., US Military Academy; M.A. and M. Ed., George Washington University) is an infantryman with specialties in unconventional warfare and foreign areas affairs. He has served 12 1/2 years overseas; 10 1/2 years in Europe. Recent assignments include four years on attache duty in Austria, two years commanding a Special Forces battalion in Germany and one year as Chief of the US Army Liaison Group at

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## FOREWORD

The National Defense University theme for the 1982-1983 academic year is "jointness." Since the attache corps is one of the oldest joint institutions of the American military services, it is particularly appropriate that it come under the scrutiny of the Strategic Studies Program at this time.

The idea for the study was our own. We hoped we could produce a report which, before it went onto the shelf, would make an impact in the real world. We were encouraged in this by the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, LTG James Williams, who agreed to sponsor the study. We are deeply grateful for his enthusiastic support. We are also indebted to BRIG GEN Donald Goodman and his staff for their advice and guidance. We hope that our efforts will prove useful to them in their day-to-day efforts to produce the best military attache system in the world.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The effectiveness of the attache system is good and has been improving in recent years. The intelligence community and Deputy Chiefs of Mission, however, criticize variation in capabilities of individual attaches. Only in the communist capitals does the system consistently provide highly qualified personnel.

There is no common service model to select attache candidates. Several service innovations deserve broader application. The Army Foreign Area Officer Program provides a pool of highly qualified, motivated candidates. The Air Force uses a panel interview and special background inquiry to determine suitability of candidates and spouses. The Navy's panel interview is too limited.

DIA liaison with service personnel centers is not adequate. Prospective attaches frequently are misled or ill-informed about working and living conditions on-station because assignment officers lack up-to-date, accurate information. Personnel requisitions need review to ensure they accurately reflect position requirements. Despite existing programs to publicize attache openings and attract candidates, few attaches are recruited this way.

Motivational factors affect both attache performance and recruitment and retention of good attaches. Career considerations, especially widely-perceived adverse impact on promotion, play a key role in recruiting. Many attaches believe their assignment will have no effect or will hurt their career. Promotion statistics indicate that in recent years attaches generally have done as well or better than their service-wide average.

Attaches are deeply concerned about the impact of attache duty on their families, and are bothered by the disparity between their benefits and those accorded embassy colleagues. There is a limit to the personal financial sacrifice attaches are prepared to make. For most attaches, funded emergency leave, home leave from remote stations, and adequate schooling arrangements, if missing from a future assignment, would cause them to decline that assignment.

The Defense Intelligence School is doing a good job, but should tailor its curriculum somewhat more and strengthen area studies. Language training is being done well. Training offered to spouses pays clear dividends.

Many attaches lack sufficient appreciation of threats posed by hostile intelligence services and violent environments. Current training is shallow and provides little hands-on experience. On-station technical assistance and training is insufficient. Only the Army and Air Force debrief returning attache personnel, thus gaining necessary data on security conditions abroad.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This study explores the human and professional potential of military attaches abroad. The intelligence produced by the defence attache system depends directly on the quality, experience and motivation of the individual attache. In turn, the attache corps plays a key role in the national intelligence collection effort and is, thus, an important national asset. The nation has a right to expect the best attache corps the uniformed services and Defense Intelligence Agency can provide.

The study team believed from the outset in the essential soundness of the system, a conviction strengthened by our investigations. We also were convinced the system could be improved. Our objectives were to assess the performance of the attache personnel system and identify practical ways to make that system work even more effectively.

We approached the subject by examining all aspects of the system which bear on the end product--the performance of the individual attache. Our findings and recommendations are intended to be practical and implementable.

The study encompasses attache selection, training and motivation. We recognize that there are other factors, mainly operational and organizational, which affect the quality of the intelligence produced by the attache system, but space and the limits of our own resources restricted us to personnel-related issues.

The report contains seven chapters. The chapter "System Evaluation," provides a very brief overall assessment of the attache system based on the views of those who work closely with attaches in

the field or process their reporting in Washington. The next four chapters correspond to those factors which, in our view, determine the performance of attaches. Chapter III examines the selection process. Chapters IV and V deal with motivational factors, subdivided into "Career Considerations" and "Personal Consideration." Chapter VI examines training as a factor in attaché performance. For reasons of clarity, our recommendations are included at the end of each chapter, rather than being grouped at the end of the report.

At LTG William's request, we have paid special attention to issues related to the preparation of attaches to protect themselves and their families against the threats posed by hostile intelligence services and violent environments abroad. Our findings and recommendations are set forth in Chapter VII.

The data have been collected by both interview and questionnaire. Initial interviews were conducted within DIA, the service personnel offices, and the intelligence community. These interviews helped to shape the study and sharpen lines of inquiry. A comprehensive questionnaire was then submitted to all serving attaches, eliciting a high return and very thoughtful comments. Another questionnaire was submitted to all Deputy Chiefs of Mission (DCM's) at embassies hosting a Defense Attache Office (DAO). The results of these questionnaires were tested and refined in additional interviews in Washington.

To keep the report readable and brief, only the key statistical findings have been included. For those who may wish more detail or who may question certain conclusions, the detailed results of our surveys will be available from the Executive Officer in the DIA Office of Attache Affairs.

## CHAPTER II

### SYSTEM EVALUATION

#### Approach to the Data

How effective is the defense attache system? We sought the answer to this question to determine if improvements were needed and, thus, whether we should proceed with the overall study. The two primary sources of data--the questionnaire submitted to DCM's and intelligence community interviews--yielded a general consensus, which simplified the task of drawing conclusions.

#### Basic Findings

The data point to three general conclusions:

1. The attache system produces intelligence of unique value to the intelligence community. The professional military officer brings to the intelligence collection mission special capabilities for observation and interpretation of areas of specific intelligence interest. His professional standing provides personal access difficult for civilians to develop. Attache reporting and operational recommendations are especially vital in crisis situations.

2. While the overall quality of the attache corps is good, there is a striking variation in the performance of individual attaches. This uneven performance detracts from the professional reputation of the system as a whole.

3. The general quality of attache personnel being posted abroad appears to have been rising in recent years. Intelligence analysts of long experience noted this in particular, while comments of a number of DCM's seemed to reinforce the judgment.

### Analysis

The judgment that the attache corps was "erratic" or "uneven" was an almost universal theme running through both the interviews and questionnaire responses. Attaches assigned to the communist world seemed to be the exception. They received consistently favorable comments from all observers. Elsewhere, the "erratic" label seemed to stick regardless of the size or importance of the embassy. There seemed to be no pattern with which one could relate the performance of attaches to the country of assignment, the region, or the importance of the intelligence mission. The personnel system seems to produce good men in the majority of cases, but it stumbles frequently enough and badly enough so as to seriously affect the overall professional reputation of the attache corps.

Among the services, the Army has the best overall professional reputation. Many observers attributed this to the Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program, both for the area knowledge the FAO possesses and because of the greater intelligence experience he often brings with him as a result of previous assignments in the intelligence field.

Two complaints were registered with sufficient frequency that we believe they deserve recording even though their implications fall somewhat outside the scope of this study.

1. Many observers believe that the assignment of more than one O-6 (full colonel) in large DAO's wastes senior personnel resources while making it difficult for the Defense Attache (DAIT) to provide strong leadership and responsible management. What appears to outside observers, to be rank-heavy DAOs contributes to a frequent perception

that junior officers often do most of the work while their "over-the-hill" or less competent superiors socialize. Such situations also give the impression that considerations of service rivalry (each service needing 0-6 representation) have outweighed those of operational efficiency in determination of the rank structure of the DAO.

2. Some observers suggested that all too often the service designation of a given DATT is not the same as that of the dominant service in his country, thus hampering access and operational effectiveness. Complaints were particularly frequent relative to Latin America where we reportedly have a number of Air Force and Navy DATTs in countries where the army is not only the dominant service but also a key factor within the domestic political structure.

## CHAPTER III

### THE ATTACHE SELECTION PROCESS

#### Approach to the Data

This section focuses on the selection process itself, leaving aside for the moment the subjective considerations of the attache candidate. Our approach has been to review comments of attache and assignment personnel concerning the selection process to identify areas where improvement was possible. Given the variation of procedure among services, we inevitably compared and contrasted existing operations with a view to recommending the optimum common model.

#### Basic Findings

Six basic findings emerged:

1. The existence of a pool of individuals interested in and qualified for attache duty is a key factor affecting a service's ability to provide DIA with a timely nomination of a qualified officer. The Army and Air Force have very different, but effective programs which provide such a pool.
2. The Air Force has developed two highly effective tools to ensure selection of the best officers: security and suitability prescreening of attache nominees, and the use of a panel interview of the nominee and his spouse.
3. Existing programs designed to publicize attache openings and attract candidates do not appear to be as effective as they could be since only a small percentage of current attaches were attracted through this medium.
4. Service personnel centers are being provided inaccurate or

insufficient information to attache candidates in some cases about their posts of assignments, raising potentially serious problems for morale and subsequent performance.

5. DIA's requisitions to the services may not accurately reflect the current position requirements on-station in a significant number of cases.

6. A possibly significant measure of the quality of attache candidates is the degree to which DIA's detailed prerequisites for candidates are met. Statistical data was available only from the Army, and it indicated that the Army was doing well.

#### Analysis

DIA's Office of Attache Affairs reports that the Army and Air Force have been the most responsive services in terms of timely nominations of qualified officers. We believe that this is largely because these two services have systems for preidentification of officers who have an interest in and qualifications for attache duty. The Army's FAO program serves larger purposes than simply providing a pool of qualified and motivated attache candidates, but this is one of its important achievements.

The Air Force's Office of Attache Affairs has a "FAO-like" program: junior officers (O-5 and below) selected for attache duty are sent to the Naval Post Graduate School for a masters degree in area studies, and from there to intensive language training. In addition, the Air Force's Attache Affairs Office maintains a condensed file on all officers who have ever expressed an interest in attache duty. Neither the Navy nor Marine Corps have any similar systems or procedures. The success of the Army and Air Force suggests that, at a

minimum, adaptations of their systems should be implemented by the Navy and Marine Corps.

The services screen potential attaches in a variety of ways. The Air Force has the most effective, as well as the most ambitious system. (The Navy has also instituted a panel, but only for captain-level nominees.) It brings both the nominee and his spouse to Washington for a formal panel interview. Current attaches strongly support (57 percent, representing all services) this system, indentifying it as a strong point in the selection process. Assignment officers of the services also endorsed the concept. The panel system has three major benefits: (1) It screens out couples whose written record may appear highly satisfactory, but who could be socially or motivationally unsuited; (2) It demonstrates the importance and prestige the Air Force places on the position; and (3) It provides an opportunity for the couple to receive realistic and detailed data on the assignment. The effectiveness of the panel could be further enhanced by two refinements: (1) Inclusion of counterintelligence and psychology professionals among its members; and (2) A more structured, substantive format for the conduct of the interviews.

The Air Force also has instituted a rigorous screening program run by its Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) which could serve as a model for the other services. The need for special security screening procedures for the highly unusual and stressful attache duty is recognized by assignment personnel of all the services. Approximately one-third of those persons relieved early from attache training or duty in 1981 were removed because of family problems. Rough

statistics for 1982 indicated one-fourth of early returns from assignment were because of marital problems. DIA's Office of Security records contain several recent cases where alcohol abuse and sexual indiscretions were the principal "security" problem. Most of these problems probably existed before selection. We believe that tighter screening processes could prevent the selection of most attaches (and attache families) who have already displayed a propensity for serious personal problems. The Air Forces's Attache Nominee Screening Program, "Seven Interns," has demonstrated this by successfully weeding out a number of individuals with existing or potential problems.

There is an unwritten DIA rule--don't nominate individuals who are nonselects for promotion. The Army FAO manager believes that, as a result, DIA is missing out on some highly-qualified FAOs who may have hurt their promotion chances by heavy concentration on their regional area at the expense of their other specialty. Lack of full qualification in that other specialty may not impact on their ability to perform well as an attache. While we have no way of testing this hypothesis, it seems consistent with what we know of certain Army FAO career patterns.

In a related area, the Air Force has recently begun using specially tailored psychological tests for AFOSI agents and for all applicants for AFOSI duty. The AFOSI Staff Psychologist believes that psychological tests can be developed which will enhance the quality of attache screening, though he cautions that psychological testing should be considered merely one available tool in a balanced screening process.

Each service and DIA place articles in military publications and use their own newsletters to publicize attache duty and identify available attache assignments. Only nine percent of current attaches became aware of their assignment by such means. The great bulk (56 percent) first heard of attache openings from assignment personnel. This split almost evenly between calls initiated by the assignment agencies and those placed by the individual. We believe a broad and coordinated effort to publicize attache opportunities and the advantages of attache service could generate additional interest and volunteers.

Examination of the interaction of assignment personnel and attache candidates indicated some possible problems. A surprising 74 percent of attaches reported that they had volunteered or "sold themselves" on their current assignment, rather than having been persuaded by their assignment officer. Where persuasion was involved, however, a measure of coercion appears to have been employed in some cases. Among current attaches, seven percent reported they were told to take the attache job or be penalized, while 16 percent reported that the assignment was sold as the best among alternatives--not stating what the alternatives were. The assignment officer for Army colonels said he has had, on occasion, to present attache duty as a "take it or retire" proposition. Individuals forced into an assignment cannot be expected to perform with enthusiasm. It is in the service's interest to assign only true volunteers--otherwise service and national reputations may suffer and the full potential for quality intelligence may not be realized.

The performance of an attache can be adversely affected when he

arrives on-station to find conditions which are markedly worse than those portrayed by assignment personnel. More than one in five of current attaches reported that they were misled:

--13 percent said they were provided some bad data and that conditions were worse than portrayed, while

--eight percent said they were provided distorted data and that conditions were far worse than portrayed.

In addition, another 17 percent reported that service assignment officers did not know details of on-station conditions; another 13 percent had the same complaint, but reported that they were referred to others for the information. In sum, more than half of current attaches received either inaccurate or insufficient information from their assignment officer.

Assignment officers generally acknowledged that they have only limited information on specific conditions at any given station. They often have State Department Post Reports, as well as some information gained from correspondence or discussions with current or past attaches--but not enough. Most believed they needed more specifics on housing, work environment and other local conditions to provide potential attaches sufficient data to permit serious consideration of the assignment. Some also pointed out that such information was needed to develop an atmosphere in which the assignment officer is perceived by candidates as knowledgeable and concerned.

Accurate requisitions are essential to the process of placing qualified attaches on-station. While 69 percent of respondents believed their requisitions were appropriate, 25 percent stated some changes were needed. We cannot evaluate the validity of their

suggestions, but conclude that there is a need to review the process used to validate requisitions and to ensure that suggested changes are evaluated. A requisition validation process designed to adjust position prerequisites to changing conditions on-station does exist within DIA. We gained the impression, however, that this system is quite dependent on subjective judgments and on the quality of working relationships between desk officers and officers on-station. The solution may simply lie in stricter adherence to current procedures, but further examination of the problem could also suggest the need for new procedures.

There is no altogether satisfactory means of determining if the selection process is providing qualified officers, but one measure may be the degree to which the services are meeting the requisition prerequisites established by DIA. Unfortunately, detailed data were available only from the Army. The subjective views of Air Force and Marine Corps assignment officers was that "most prerequisites were met." The Navy acknowledged that some prerequisites were routinely not met, specifically graduation from a Senior Service College (SSC) and intelligence background. An analysis of a representative sample of Army requisitions revealed that, for O-5's and below, 80 percent of "mandatory" and 75 percent of "desired" prerequisites were met. In a similar sample of Army O-6's, 83 percent of "mandatory" and 69 percent of "desired" prerequisites were met. At the colonial level, the SSC requirement was frequently not met, suggesting a possible "quality gap," since attendance at a SSC is widely used within the Army as a quality indicator. Nonetheless, we conclude that, overall, the Army is doing well, especially considering the very specific nature of some

of the combinations of background experience requested.

#### Recommendations

1. That the Navy and Marine Corps develop systems to create a pool of qualified and potentially interested officers, drawing on the successful experience of the Army and the Air Force. We believe the FAO system is a highly desirable model, and further recommend that the Air Force consider establishment of a formal FAO program.

2. That the Army, Navy and Marine Corps develop suitability screening programs similar to that used by the Air Force Office of Special Investigations.

3. That the Army and Marine Corps establish a panel interview program similar to the Air Force's and that the Navy expand its program to include all attache candidates.

4. That the Air Force develop a more structured format for the conduct of panel interviews, and that it consider inclusion of individuals with professional training in psychology and counterintelligence on the panels.

5. That DIA take the lead in examining the utility of psychological testing for the screening of attache candidates.

6. That all services reinforce the principle of voluntariness in the selection process, and that DIA, during the approval process, ensure that the nominee is, in fact, a volunteer.

7. That DIA modify, in the case of FAOs, its policy prohibiting nomination of officers nonselected for promotion.

8. That the services and DIA expand their public information efforts in an effort to draw additional volunteers.

9. That DIA assure that service assignment officers are provided

with standard, accurate and current information packages on each station.

10. That DIA review its process for ensuring that the prerequisites in requisitions are kept current.

## CHAPTER IV

### CAREER CONSIDERATIONS

#### Approach to the Data

Career considerations significantly affect an officer's decision to volunteer for, or accept an attache assignment. If attache duty can be viewed as career enhancing, more officers will seek these assignments. This section assesses the impact of attache duty on military careers, drawing on three perspectives: (1) officers currently assigned to attache duty; (2) the services' personnel management branches; and (3) as reflected in the promotion statistics.

#### Basic Findings

1. A large majority of current attaches believe that attache duty will have (or has had) either a negative impact on their career or no impact at all. Full colonels were markedly more pessimistic regarding the career impact of attache duty than were more junior officers.

2. Many current attaches cite the failure of attaches to be promoted, particularly from O-6 to O-7, in substantiating their belief that attache duty has a negative career impact.

3. The available statistics contradict the conventional perception cited above. In recent years, attaches and former attaches appear on the average to have done as well or better than their service-wide average in being promoted. (The only fairly consistent exception was Navy Unrestricted Line Officers.)

#### Analysis

Our questionnaire revealed that attaches currently in the system share the widely-held view that attache duty, at best, does not help

one's career. The question was cast in personal terms, i.e., whether their attache tour would have (or had had) a positive or negative impact on their competitiveness for promotion. The responses were categorized as "positive," "negative," or "no effect," the latter category including responses such as "unknown."

Of the respondents:

- The majority believed that attache duty has either a negative impact (42 percent) or no effect (40 percent);

- Of those who indicated that attache duty had a positive impact, a large majority (77 percent) were O-5's. Many of these were intelligence sub-specialists within their service;

- Only eight percent of O-6's believed attache duty had a positive impact, while 56 percent believed the impact to be negative. The comparable statistics for O-5's and below were 28 percent positive and 26 percent negative.

- 18 percent of the respondents, all O-6's, reported that they either were not competitive for promotion when assigned or had intended to retire within the next few years. The majority of these indicated that attache duty had no effect on their careers.

To provide a somewhat different perspective, attaches were asked if, from a career standpoint, they would consider a subsequent attache assignment. A majority (57 percent) responded affirmatively. This result is at least consistent with the statistics cited above (adding together the "positive" and "no effect" categories), though it may also reflect some admixture of what might more accurately be called "personal" considerations (e.g., job satisfaction).

Accurate promotion statistics obviously are essential to a

definitive analysis of the career impact of attache duty. The data available to us were neither sufficiently "hard" nor complete to permit confident conclusions. In particular, Army figures for attaches alone were unavailable. The Army data presented below is for FAO's. Since most Army attaches at O-5 and below are also FAO's, the figures are probably reasonably accurate for our purposes. At the O-6 level, they are less satisfactory since the percentage of FAO's is lower.

With these caveats, the data appear to support the following observations regarding the frequency of promotion for the past four years of officers who have served in attache billets:

- To O-4: Higher than the all-service percentage for all services;
- To O-5: Higher than the all-service percentage for the Army, Air Force and Navy (Restricted Line), and slightly lower for the Navy (Unrestricted Line);
- To O-6: Higher than the all-service percentage for the Air Force and Navy (Restricted Line), about even for the Army, and lower for the Navy (Unrestricted Line).

No comparative statistics are available for promotion to O-7. The percentage of O-6's who get past this barrier is very small, regardless of career pattern, and so even the occasional former attache promoted to field grade is significant. It is noteworthy that three Army FAO's were selected for O-7 in 1982. One officer had a previous attache tour, another had MAAG duty, and the third served in the Military Liaison Mission in Potsdam, which is an "attache-like" tour. All three officers are currently programmed for attache duty.

For a different perspective, we interviewed officers in the services' personnel management branches, including those tasked with filling attache billets and those involved in career counseling. They made two general points:

1. Attache duty does not have as much significance as on operational tour within one's own service. Completion of the prescribed operational tours throughout one's career is necessary to remain competitive for promotion.

2. For those officers with an intelligence specialty or sub-specialty, attache duty enhances competitiveness for promotion, but only if complemented by the requisite operational tours in one's alternate specialty.

These comments reflect the requirement--which is generally accepted by all observers--that an officer "check the block" in operational assignments, and that he do well in those assignments. The debate as to the relative career attractiveness of alternative duty assignments (including attache duty) is primarily relevant to those officers who have completed the requisite operational tours. Many attaches sense a significant difference in viewpoint between themselves and the "people in Washington"--DIA, the service personnel branches, and selection boards. Many commented that their duty carries as much responsibility as an operational billet, is professionally demanding, and that it makes an important contribution to national security. Yet many are frustrated and discouraged because they perceive that their service regards attache duty as little more than an assignment to the "cocktail circuit."

Asked how attache duty could be made more attractive, (from a

career standpoint), a number of attaches suggested that the services and DIA advertise the contribution which such duty makes to national security. Other suggestions included guaranteeing attaches a competitive follow-on tour and making attache duty equivalent to an operational or command tour. (We note that the Navy has recently designated four attache billets as equivalent to major command.) While neither of these latter ideas is feasible as a matter of general policy, any steps taken in that direction would be seen by attaches and attache candidates as indications that attache duty is taken seriously by the parent services.

#### Recommendations

1. That the services work up accurate statistical data on the relative promotion rates of attaches and former attaches. As appropriate, these statistics should be widely publicized and utilized by assignment officers to dispel the myth that attache duty cannot help, and may harm one's career.
2. That the services designate additional positions, as appropriate, as equivalent to command or operational billets.
3. That the services and DIA assure that attaches are made aware of initiatives taken to improve the attache system and to enhance the attractiveness of attache duty.

## CHAPTER V

### PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS

#### Approach to the Data

This portion of the study analyzes those personal considerations that influence an officer to accept an attache assignment. The approach was to determine if the officer would accept his present attache assignment (if given the chance to start over again) or accept another attache assignment either immediately following or at some time in the future. The intent was to screen out the minor complaints and dissatisfaction with aspects of the "system" and attache life to reveal those considerations that truly had impact on the health of the system.

#### Basic Findings

From analysis of the data yielded by the questionnaire, five major findings emerged:

1. Attaches, with the exception of the rare "Spartan" (and every service had one or two), truly care about their families. The quality of life they can provide them, the education of their children, and separation from older college age children and members of their extended family (particularly elderly, ill parents) all influence significantly an officer's decision whether to volunteer for or accept attache duty.

2. Attaches honestly enjoy their work. They are often almost ecstatic about the opportunity to serve in a position that offers challenge and job satisfaction, while providing unique opportunities for their families.

3. The attache population is divided into three fields:

a. A relatively small group with either no children or children who are grown and on their own and no elderly or ill parents over which to be concerned. This group is generally the most flexible personally;

b. The older attaches, usually principals, whose children are away at college. They exhibit great concern over sharing as much time during these last few years of "childhood" as is possible;

and, c. The younger attaches, mostly assistants, who have younger school-age children which they want either with them on post or, educational opportunities lacking, in a properly supervised, quality school.

4. From a personal perspective, there are three different attache "worlds":

a. The Western countries, offering a somewhat familiar living environment, often not far removed from US military installations and airways;

b. The Communist Bloc countries, with their hostile environment and harsher living standards;

and, c. The lesser developed countries, with significantly lower, sometimes sub-standard living conditions, far removed from home, lacking in proper medical care, and often offering the physical threat of violence and the financial burden of an extremely high cost of living and rampant inflation.

5. As a whole, the attache community, while perhaps envious of the significant (and to them inexplicable) disparity in benefits provided their colleagues from other governmental departments and agencies, would not hold the complete benefits package as a major

determinant in deciding upon an attache assignment. They would, however, on a benefit-specific basis, decline future assignment, depending on their "population field" (see basic findings above) and the "attache world" in which they are being asked to serve.

#### Analysis

Respondents were asked to indicate which items from a list of personal considerations were important in deciding to accept their current attache assignment. The following nine items were considered to be important by more than one-third of the respondents:

Item	%
Quarters availability and adequacy	55
Quality of education available	50
Adequacy of COLA	50
Provisions for medical emergencies	50
Medical support available	47
Adequacy of SHA and rental support	45
Preparatory phase personal expenses	42
Location of schools	38
Unreimbursed "out of pocket" costs	38

There is a clear pattern. Five of the nine items affect directly the quality of life which attaches can provide their families. The remaining four items concern expenses, including the burden of start-up costs, which relate to the primary "quality of life" issue.

Of course, the true importance of these items lies with the effect they would have on getting attaches on-station. To determine this impact, respondents were asked, if given the opportunity to begin the attache assignment process again, would they accept the same assignment? Eighty-four percent of the O-6 respondents and 83 percent of the O-5 and below respondents affirmed their decision for their present assignment. Among those who indicated they would decline

their present assignment, 45 percent of them gave personal considerations and 59 percent of these considerations were cost related.

To take another view of the personal considerations, respondents were asked if any personal considerations would cause them to decline future attache duty. To this inquiry, 48 percent of the O-6 respondents and 74 percent of the O-5 and below respondents indicated one or more personal considerations which, if unacceptable at a proposed duty station, would cause them to decline an attache assignment. The considerations cited can be grouped into four categories:

1. Financial burden (including start-up costs), insufficient station allowances, and unreimbursed expenses.

2. The schooling situation, including inadequate educational opportunities on post or the requirement to board children at DOD schools at a great distance from post.

3. The quality of life standards at post, which include adequacy of quarters, medical support, hostility of the political or cultural environment, etc.

4. The threat of terrorism and violence.

The extent of the impact of these four major categories is shown below (% indicates those who would decline assignment):

Item	O-6	O-5 and below
Financial burden	18%	30%
School situation	8%	30%
Quality of life	19%	28%
Threat	14%	17%

The attaches were also asked whether they should receive all the

benefits afforded embassy colleagues from other governmental departments and agencies. The overwhelming response was--yes! Further, many respondents asked, why shouldn't all personnel in the service of their country receive the same benefits for performing essentially the same duties at the same post? Despite the almost emotional support for equal benefits for all, only 11 percent of the O-6 respondents and 22 percent of the O-5 and below respondents indicated that provision of a completely equal benefits package would affect their decision for another attache assignment. In many instances, however, one or two separate benefits were cited as being critical to acceptance of future attache duty.

Finally, the respondents were asked if, from a personal standpoint (professional and career considerations aside), they would accept another attache assignment either immediately following their present assignment or at some point in the future. The response was truly the "acid test":

Accept Assignment	O-6	O-5 and below
Immediately following-on	55%	48%
At some point in future	40%	75%

The relatively high percentage of O-6 respondents prepared to accept an immediate follow-on assignment is not surprising, when one considers the impact of three of the four most significant personal aspects identified above. As a group they have more service and higher pay and allowances. Generally, their children are older and away at college. Finally, they've had more time to acquire some of the personal possessions that contribute to a higher quality of life

and can, on the basis of their assignment as a DATT or Service Principal Attache, anticipate somewhat better quarters than can an assistant attache. Actually, the percentage indicating acceptance of both immediately following and future assignments would have been considerably higher if it were not that many respondents were approaching mandatory retirement dates and wanted to be in the US for their final assignment. Even so, many senior O-6 respondents indicated a willingness to extend on-station or even serve beyond 30 years if it were allowed.

The O-5 and below respondents expressed a greater willingness to serve again at some point in the future (75 percent), rather than immediately following their present assignment (48 percent). In their comments they gave the impression that they would "out-grow" some of the personal considerations that also caused 74 percent of them to indicate one or more items that would cause them to decline future attache duty. Reflecting on the four major considerations above, one can see how time could alleviate the financial burden of life on-station by bringing greater pay and allowances through promotion and increased time in service. The impact of schooling, however, is not so easily solved by the passage of time. While children may out-grow the dilemma of inadequate schooling on-station, they simply pass into the group of college students that must be transported home on vacations. Many O-5 and below respondents indicated that future assignment as an attache would have to wait until their children were grown and on their own. Their interpretation of family quality of life included being together when school vacations allowed. This overlapped with the stated financial burden of attache service in

terms of often unmanageable costs of transportation. Probably in this area more than any other was the disparity between the benefits of DOD and other governmental departments and agencies most acutely felt.

The fourth area of concern to all attaches, that of the threat of terrorism and violence, defies legislative or administrative amelioration. Many attaches accept it as one of the risks of the business; and for others, no amount of off-set could persuade them to subject their families to this threat.

#### Recommendations

The following recommendations are a consolidation of suggestions solicited from the respondents:

1. Provide an interest-free loan at some point in each attache's preparatory training to assist in meeting the extraordinary start-up costs associated with the assignment. Repayment of this loan would take place over the duration of the normal tour.
2. Provide schooling allowances identical to those provided members of the State Department for all stations lacking adequate schooling. (NOTE: DOD boarding schools are considered inadequate in terms of both quality of education and degree of supervision. Probably no amount of effort will alter that perception.)
3. Provide for all stations the same travel allowances for children attending school and college away from station as provided members of the State Department.
4. Provide a funded environmental and morale leave program for stations designated by the State Department as "hardship" assignments.
5. Provide funded emergency leave for families at all posts not financially convenient to MAC airways.

6. Review the housing situation at all stations, to assess the adequacy of quarters, furnishings (when provided) and household goods shipping allowances (where restricted), to ensure all personnel are adequately housed by American standards. Where required, take action to buy or lease adequate housing and furnishings. Increase station housing allowances and rental supplements, as required.

7. Provide as station property at all stations adequate dinnerware, glassware, serving pieces, etc., to permit proper representational entertainment. Normal breakage and fair wear and tear would be at station expense.

## CHAPTER VI

### TRAINING

#### Approach to the Data

DIA and the services spend substantial human and financial resources in the training of attache designates, implicitly assigning a very high value on training as a factor in attache performance. We have sought to assess how well the training is being done. We have also examined specific issues relating to the training program which have been raised by current attaches or suggested in interviews conducted at DIA, the services, the CIA and the State Department.

#### Basic Findings

The following major themes emerged:

1. The Defense Intelligence School (DIS) is doing a commendable job under difficult circumstances in preparing officers for attache assignments. Not only is the collection environment unique for each DAO, but training requirements of individual attache designates vary widely.
2. Additional flexibility seems desirable in the DIS curriculum. The current "two-track" course of study, which divides the attache world into "hostile" and "nonhostile" environments, does not appear to accommodate the divergent needs of many students, especially those assigned to NATO capitals. There also appears to be room in the curriculum for more focus on area studies and the individual's country of assignment.
3. Language training is absolutely essential and is being done well.
4. Spouses are considered full members of the attache team and

essential to the intelligence collection effort. Investments in the training of spouses pay clear dividends.

5. Many attaches believe that intelligence training is secondary in importance to one's overall military experience. Attache training is a career-long process. The training provided by the DIS is only a topping-off procedure which builds on a broad base of experience.

#### Analysis

The overwhelming majority (82 percent) of attaches currently on-station reported that they consider themselves to have been adequately trained. This percentage generally held up across service lines. Many described their DIS training as "excellent" or "outstanding." Even among the 18 percent who felt their training was inadequate, a number commented that DIS was not to blame. Some attaches mentioned that, due to short-fuse assignments, they had received less than the full attache course. (Some abbreviated courses ranged in length from a few days to a few weeks.)

Even though most attaches stated they had been adequately trained at the DIS, 30 percent recommended changes (some of which have already been implemented) in the curriculum. These recommendations were advanced within a generally agreed understanding that DIS is constrained by budgetary and management considerations to take, to the extent possible, a least-common-denominator approach to curriculum design. Nonetheless, many attaches thought that the curriculum could be further tailored to individual requirements. Specifically, the current two-track (hostile and nonhostile) system was criticized as an oversimplified organizing principle.

Our detailed examination of the DIS curriculum suggests that there

is, in fact, room for at least one further curriculum track without creating additional budgetary demands. A three-track approach could be designed which focused on NATO, the communist bloc, and the third world as separate collection environments. Such a restructuring would entail increased emphasis on all aspects of intelligence collection and operations for the hostile environments of bloc nations, with a concomittant decrease in such intelligence-specific training for attaches assigned to NATO or other friendly capitals. Since many third world intelligence environments fall between these extremes, a curriculum track could be designed which drew elements from the other two tracks. In our view, a three-track curriculum would result in considerably more focused instruction, without requiring an overall increase in instructional resources. This is because the NATO, or "friendly" track could be very substantially reduced in length--indeed, we believe that attaches destined for NATO capitals need little of what is offered in the current DIS programs.

The recommendations of current attaches for specific changes in the curriculum appear to support the above analysis. The recommendations were highly location-specific. Attaches in NATO or "friendly" countries most often recommended the de-emphasis or deletion of photography and other specific intelligence collection instruction. Those posted in "hostile" (usually, Soviet bloc) countries most often recommended more emphasis on collection management.

Another frequent recommendation from the attaches was for more area studies; and this suggestion came from attaches regardless of location. There indeed may be room for further area (preferably

country) specialization within the DIS curriculum. Out of 414 to 450 hours of instruction (depending whether it is the "nonhostile" or "hostile" track), only 31 hours is devoted to area studies and briefings. During these periods of instruction students are divided into regional groupings, within which they are encouraged to concentrate on their individual country of assignment.

One way to expand the area studies focus of the curriculum would be to introduce a training exercise involving use of replicas of each DAO's target folder and collection requirements. The DAO's would be burdened with providing DIS with current materials, and classified storage space at DIS would be strained by such an innovation. Nonetheless, the folders would introduce greater realism into the training environment. Study of the folders could be integrated into other course material, for example, by requiring that each student update the information pertaining to his station. This project could be accomplished within the framework of a model office exercise such as that run in the DAO administration course.

There was near unanimity among attaches as well as DIA and service officials regarding the vital importance of adequate language training. Less than five percent of responding attaches indicated that language training was not essential and most of these were serving in countries where English is commonly spoken, if not an official language. Favorable comments were common regarding the quality of instruction at both the State Department's Foreign Service Institute (FSI) (where 65 percent studied) and at the Defense Language Institute (where 25 percent studied). (Ten percent were native speakers.) A few attaches voiced dissatisfaction with FSI because no

attention was devoted to military conversation or terminology. A small minority (less than two percent) were unhappy with the overall course of instruction. In general, those few who voiced complaints were also among those with the lowest test scores. This raises a question as to whether the adequacy of the school or the aptitude of the student was the reason for ineffective training.

The spouse's access to training involves very complex and emotional issues. Attache duty is "sold" by the services as a husband-wife team effort. This concept is supported by DIA and accepted by attaches. Eighty-eight percent of current attaches consider their wives to be essential elements of their intelligence collection effort. Half the remainder consider them helpful.

The DIS currently provides practically full-time training to spouses on a voluntary basis. They are offered essentially all the training received by the attache (except for that classified higher than SECRET). In addition, DIA arranges on a voluntary basis admission to a special area studies seminar conducted by the FSI. Spouses are also encouraged to attend language training. Sixty-nine percent of current attaches indicated that their spouses had participated in some phase of their training, while 62 percent thought that the opportunity for additional training should be provided. There was a consensus that government funding to cover various expenses involved would be necessary if the average spouse's participation in training was to be increased. Expenses cited included travel and TDY to join husbands in Washington, as well as babysitting fees for those with small children. Many attaches said that as a matter of fairness, such funding should already be provided.

In theory, it would be desirable to recognize the contribution of spouses by putting them on the payroll as full members of the DAO, but we recognize that cost, as well as legal and bureaucratic complications make this infeasible. We conclude, therefore, that the current voluntary training arrangement is the only practical one and accept the fact that some spouses (like some attaches) will be better trained and, therefore, more effective than others.

Although not directly related to training as such, several attaches recommended that the current overlap on-station between an attache and his replacement be extended as a matter of policy. The current overlap period (usually less than ten days) appears to be almost totally consumed by essential social or protocol aspects of the job, with intelligence operations receiving scant attention. As several attaches pointed out, some aspects of the job can be learned only on-station. It would appear reasonable, therefore, to allow a longer period of overlap for essential on-the-job training.

In a line of inquiry only partly related to training considerations, we asked current attaches several questions designed to determine (1) if they had prior experience in intelligence, and (2) the value of such intelligence-related tours of duty for their effectiveness as attaches. The results were:

<u>Service</u>	<u>Intelligence Experience</u>	<u>Which Experience Intelligence?</u>	<u>More Important, Operations?</u>
Army	62%	41%	59%
Navy	38%	13%	87%
Air Force	18%	6%	94%
Marines	44%	23%	77%

Clearly most attaches, probably including some whose careers have been concentrated in intelligence, consider prior operational experience to be more important to mission accomplishment than prior intelligence experience. Based on this data and specific attache comments, our conclusion is that the best observer of a host nation's military forces is an attache who is intimately familiar with his own service's operational doctrine, especially as applied in joint warfare operations. Interviews with DIA and service personnel involved in the attache selection and training process tended to corroborate this conclusion, with the possible exception of "hostile" (usually communist) environments. In those cases, many observers stated that well-trained, experienced intelligence operatives are essential to the mission.

In sum, an instant expert cannot be produced in the attache profession by concentration on technical training alone. Indeed, it would be impossible to put an individual totally inexperienced in military affairs through attache training and expect him to function effectively as an attache. Attache training is a career-long process, and breadth of previous operational experience should be a key selection criterion.

### Recommendations

1. Change the current two-track Attache Course to a three-track system tailored more specifically to the friendly environment of NATO capitals, the hostile environment of the communist bloc, and the in-between conditions of much of the third world.
2. Expand area studies at the DIS, possibly employing practical exercises involving replicas of the target folders and collection requirements of the DAO's to which students are assigned.
3. Request FSI to provide military students with some instruction in military conversation and terminology. One to three weeks of such tailored instruction seems reasonable.
4. Increase the overlap between arriving and departing attaches to a minimum of two weeks in order to provide for a sufficient period of concentrated OJT.

## CHAPTER VII

### SPECIAL REVIEW OF SECURITY CONCERNS

#### Approach to the Data

At the request of the study's sponsor, special attention was paid to the capability of attaches and their families to protect themselves from two essentially different security threats--hostile intelligence and violence. Data was gathered by interviewing counterintelligence and security professionals from various agencies, analyzing responses to our attache questionnaire, and reviewing the Defense Intelligence School (DIS) curriculum with the assistance of the DIA and DIS staffs. We sought to discover how attaches perceive the threats as well as the degree to which they are prepared to counter them.

"Violence," as it affects attaches, includes terrorism, crime and insurgency. The countermeasures are "antiviolence." Hostile intelligence activities include foreign efforts to gather information from or about attache personnel, including attempts to recruit for espionage. Countermeasures are referred to as "counterintelligence." These definitions are important to distinguish the two separate threats under review, since each requires different awareness and defenses.

#### Basic Findings

The data produced six basic findings:

1. Attaches in general do not receive adequate practical training in antiviolence procedures.
2. Some attaches assigned to possibly violent areas perceive neither a threat nor a need for antiviolence measures. Others feel

the need for countermeasures, but see themselves and their families as untrained.

3. Awareness of a potential hostile intelligence threat against attaches in western and third world countries appears to be low.

4. Most attaches assigned to communist countries consider themselves well prepared to handle the pervasive hostile intelligence threat. However, not all accept the threat as real or serious. Many spouses are not adequately prepared to understand and help counter intrusive activities.

5. The DIA Office of Security (OS) has a number of positive programs in support of the counterintelligence and antiterrorism needs of the DAO's. The frequency of on-station training and assistance is, however, inadequate, especially for areas with high violence or intelligence threats. DIA/OS preassignment briefings of individual attaches are valuable, but too often do not occur.

6. Army and Air Force counterintelligence agencies have excellent programs to debrief attache and support personnel returning from communist country assignments. Navy and Marine Corps do not have similar programs.

#### Analysis

DIS, with the assistance of DIA/OS, puts considerable curriculum emphasis on classroom description of the nature of worldwide terrorism. What is lacking from the curriculum is hands-on training in the practical arts of lowering one's vulnerability to terrorist and other violent attack. This is readily acknowledged by both staffs. Not all attaches need hands-on antiterrorism or antiviolence training. Attaches assigned to communist countries are unlikely to face a threat

from serious violence. It is not safe to assume, however, that only attaches assigned to countries currently experiencing internal turbulence need antiviolence training. The threat of serious crime is almost a global phenomenon. The potential also exists for isolated terrorist incidents in even highly stable countries and, of course, the threat environment can change quickly. Low level insurgencies are increasingly common throughout the third world. Thus, almost without exception, official Americans stationed in western and third world capitals face some degree of threat from violence.

The attache questionnaire, however, revealed that 11 percent of attaches felt that their families needed no preparation for protection against violence. Although 11 percent might seem low enough overall, some of these respondents were assigned to countries with historically serious terrorist activity or high crime levels. Sixteen percent of the respondents recognized the threat, but felt they received little-to-no preparation for protecting themselves or their families. Since the unaware and the unprepared make optimum targets, we believe it is essential that every attache receives basic, practical training in antiviolence measures and a full briefing on the nature of the threat in his country. In addition, adult dependents require a general understanding of both the local situation and of appropriate protective measures so they can be effective links in the personal security chain.

Regarding the intelligence threat, 23 percent of respondents stated they did not need any preparation to counter hostile intelligence efforts. Despite some apparent confusion over the intent of the question, it is clear that a significant number of attaches

(perhaps more than 23 percent) were unaware or unconcerned that Soviet and other communist intelligence services seek to cultivate and coopt attache personnel even when assigned to western and third world countries. There was also some lack of appreciation that various noncommunist host governments seek to exploit US officials. Such attitudes create a counterintelligence weakness in overall DAS security. Increased training and periodic reemphasis appear necessary.

Attaches and families assigned to communist capitals face uniquely serious intelligence threats. Nonetheless, the formal DIS curriculum contains only a very limited amount of classroom instruction designed to prepare students for such assignments, either in terms of threat assessment or counterintelligence training. DIS does conduct a number of practical exercises simulating these hostile conditions, but students do not have adequate instructional background to make maximum use of them. Despite these instructional shortcomings, a large majority of attaches in communist country posts felt they were well prepared for the hostile intelligence environment. Not so encouraging, however, were a small number of respondents who saw no need for counterintelligence preparation prior to eastern European assignments. Due to the pervasive and intrusive nature of this threat environment, even one attache who believes there is no real threat (because no overt hostile actions have been "experienced" or "seen") presents an unacceptable risk of information compromise or worse.

The awareness level and training of spouses is almost as important as that of the attache himself. It is essential that spouses fully understand what official Americans are up against behind the Iron

Certain. Unfortunately, many attache spouses going to communist countries do not (and many cannot) receive the available DIS training. The nature of the threat dictates that unusual efforts be made to ensure that all such spouses both comprehend and know how to counter it.

Security specialists from DIA/OS visit the highest-threat posts approximately once every 15 months. The majority of DAO's are visited only once every three years. These visits provide an essential on-scene review of countermeasures effectiveness, as well as the immediate opportunity to provide the training necessary to correct deficiencies. DIA/OS cannot provide adequate support in this area with its current staff visit schedule. Expanded staff and increased travel funds are required.

DIA/OS also offers a program of tailored country briefings for each attache just prior to his departure at which he receives up-to-date threat information and associated countermeasures advice. Despite the obvious value of this excellent program, only approximately 50 percent of the attaches take advantage of it because the briefings are voluntary.

Both the Army Special Operations Detachment (Intelligence and Security Command) and HQ Air Force Office of Special Investigations thoroughly debrief, for counterintelligence purposes, each attache and support person returning from communist country stations. This extensive program is justified by information uncovered regarding current hostile tactics used against our attaches, systemic or institutional security weaknesses on-station, and specific counterintelligence problems requiring investigation. This

information is important not only in identifying problems requiring action, but it is also useful in designing future training programs. The results are also helpful to the State Department and other agencies in strengthening their security programs. Neither the Navy nor the Marine Corps conduct similar security debriefings of their personnel.

#### Recommendations

Improvements appear necessary in several areas to enhance the security of our attaches, their families and the Defense Attache System against violence and hostile intelligence:

1. Ensure that all attaches going to assignments with medium-to-high violence threat levels receive hands-on countermeasures training. In addition, all attaches, regardless of destination, should receive a basic complement of countermeasures instruction relating to terrorist, crime and related violent threats.

2. All adult dependents, regardless of destination, should receive an abbreviated training program on (a) basic antiviolenace countermeasures, and (b) the nature of the intelligence threat from both hostile powers and some host country services.

3. Develop a concentrated training segment for all attaches which focuses on (a) techniques used by communist intelligence services to socially cultivate and exploit or recruit Americans throughout the world, and (b) other information gathering techniques directed against Americans abroad by some noncommunist host countries.

4. For attaches assigned to communist countries, enhance existing training on the nature of the hostile intelligence threat and associated countermeasures. All adult dependents should receive an

abbreviated form of this training.

5. Require all attaches to visit DIA/OS for a briefing on current conditions just prior to departure.

6. Enable DIA/OS to make at least annual staff assistance and training visits to each station experiencing a medium-to-high intelligence or violence threat.

7. The Navy and Marine Corps should initiate programs to fully debrief for counterintelligence purposes all attache and enlisted support personnel returning from communist country assignments. All services should share summary reports of debriefings with DIA/OS.